

Workers, Liberation Fighters:

Defend Julius Malema!

The East London Magistrate Court's 1 October ruling against EFF leader Julius Malema is an outrageous attack which must be fought by all of us! While Malema and the EFF are the immediate targets, make no mistake: This is a deadly threat to *everyone* in South Africa who stands up against imperialism, black oppression, austerity and attacks on the working class. Every one of us, regardless of our other political differences, has a vital and direct interest in mounting a concerted struggle to overturn this ruling.

The court found Malema guilty on five gun-related charges in a case instigated by AfriForum *seven years ago* after he allegedly fired a rifle into the air during the EFF's fifth birthday celebration. Only fools will believe that this ruling, which carries the possibility of a 15-year sentence, is about "gun safety". The racists of AfriForum have been after Malema's head ever since the EFF's founding, because the party's radical demands like land expropriation without compensation strike a chord with brutally exploited black and coloured farm workers and threaten the parasitic interests of the white baas. What's pushed AfriForum's anti-EFF campaign into overdrive is the backing of the US imperialists, who call the shots. Donald Trump read Ramaphosa and Co the riot act at the Oval Office in May, basically ordering them to lock up Malema as a condition for any easing of the crushing 30% tariffs imposed on South Africa. Any leftists or workers' leaders who remain neutral in this case are, no matter what fancy excuses they give, guilty of wretched capitulation to the US imperialist masters.

The ruling against Malema demonstrates once again that you can't fight imperialism with the butchers of Marikana. Ramaphosa and the ANC tops are hellbent on appeasing Trump and his Fifth Column supporters within the country. This will only worsen the economic and social ruin. Already, the jobs bloodbath, de-industrialisation and privatisation are speeding up week by week. Water and other basic services are totally collapsing under the pressure of imperialist austerity and

rampant looting. *Enough!* It's urgently necessary to organise collective action to start defending ourselves against this onslaught. The defence of Malema can be a spark and a rallying point to start *fighting back*.

The EFF has announced that it will appeal the ruling with a top-notch legal team. It is certainly correct to make use of every legal avenue available. But this struggle cannot be won with a strategy of relying on the courts. EFF militants must just remember the campaign against the fuel levy hike earlier this year, which ended in a costly defeat after the party put all its hopes on judicial challenges to stop the attack. The last thing we need is a repeat of that, which can only feed into the climate of helpless paralysis. Instead, left-wing militants in the EFF and other organisations must fight to push forward the defence of Malema with *class-struggle* methods. This means tying it to the struggle against imperialist austerity and for the needs of the masses. We must raise the pressure on the leaders of the mass organisations, particularly the trade unions, making a direct appeal to their members' shared interest in joining a united-front struggle against our common enemy. *An injury to one is an injury to all!*

This approach guided the campaign to defend EFF member and trade-union activist Xolani Khoza, a campaign which ended in a rare victory when the charges were dropped unconditionally two months ago. Just as with AfriForum's campaign against Malema, right-wing reactionaries hoped to silence Xolani's opposition to the pro-imperialist "GNU". But they were forced to back down, following a year-long united-front defence campaign waged by ourselves and EFF Ground Forces along with socialists and black liberation fighters representing dozens of organisations. This is the kind of campaign needed now, on a massive scale. The EFF is calling for protest at Malema's sentencing hearing in East London on 23 January 2026. There's no time to lose. We must start *now* with mobilising for this protest and organising for a struggle: *Hands off Malema! Hands off the EFF!*